

equals eleven by chasingflower

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, Fluff, Gen, again!!!
this was written before s2 i just now edited it, but keep that in mind,
wild misuse of el's powers, yall so even though i wrote this before s2
came out its very similar so i mean??

Language: English

Characters: Eleven (Stranger Things), Everyone else is mentioned,
Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers, Will Byers

Relationships: Eleven & Jim "Chief" Hopper, Eleven & Mike
Wheeler, Eleven/Mike Wheeler, Will Byers & Eleven, implied hopper/
joyce

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Summary:

She knows why she's back. She almost wishes that she didn't, but it's about Will Byers.

(It always is, it seems.)

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Author's Note:

this was written before any of the s2 content came out, so pls keep that in mind!! anyway i hope u enjoy <33333

also ps to those who don't know: mike called el for 353 days, $3 + 5 + 3 = 11$ and that's where i got the title

She wakes up and she's cold. It's bone chilling, and it soaks her dress and stings her nose and cheeks. Her hands are shaking, and she wishes her dress were longer (maybe that would help warm her?).

She's in the snow, next to the box of food the Sheriff leaves her twice a day. It's nice, she thinks, because while she was never hungry in the Upside-Down, it felt good to eat.

She knows why she's back. She almost wishes that she didn't, but it's about Will Byers.

(It always is, it seems.)

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She stays where she's sitting, because even though she knows a storm is coming, she doesn't know where she's supposed to go.

She wants to live with Mike, she guesses, but the way Mrs. Byers made her feel makes the option all too clear.

She wonders if Nancy would still like to be her sister, even if they don't live in the same place.

She wonders if Mike will forgive her, forgive her for leaving and not coming back (not that she wanted to leave in the first place).

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She wonders how long she's been gone. It can't be that long, she tells herself, but she runs her hand through her hair and she wonders.

It's not long, by any means, maybe an inch or so, but it's longer than she remembers it being, and she wonders if she's still pretty.

Mike said she was, back when she had no hair, back before he pressed his lips to hers.

She wonders what that means.

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Eventually the snow soaks through her dress and her socks and she decides that it's time to go. She looks in the box once more, just to see if there is anything that she forgot.

(She doesn't think so, but she checks all the same.)

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She walks and walks and it seems like the sky is crying, but it's white and cold and melts on her clothes. She sniffs and keeps going.

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She's eventually had enough, when it seems like she's going nowhere and the sky keeps getting darker and she keeps getting colder.

Her stomach growls and she sniffs and clenches her fists.

She closes her eyes and imagines the police station, because that's where she almost was taken in the first place, back with Benny and the social services.

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She's there, and she's cold and tired and her nose is bleeding.

She wishes for a moment that she went to Mike's house, but she worries that she not welcome (friends or not, she's been gone and she's not sure if these things have deadlines or expiration dates).

She finds that the door is locked, so she blinks back her frustration and opens it. She rubs at her nose, exhausted, and pushes the door open. She finds a couch and she's asleep within moments.

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She's woken up by a soft voice and a hand on her shoulder.

She freezes. She looks up in mute horror to see a lady with curly hair and a worried expression on her face. "Sweetie? are you alright?"

She doesn't answer, because she doesn't know what to say. She thinks she might be, but she doesn't know who this person is and while it doesn't set off alarm bells in her head, she's not completely soothed either.

The woman sighs and pushes her glasses up. "Why don't you tell me your name, Sweetie, and I'll see to getting you something to eat?"

Her stomach groans, and she glares at it, the treacherous thing that it is. She doesn't look up from her lap.

"Well, doll, I'm Flo. I'm going to get myself something to eat, and I'm going to be right back."

As the woman turns to leave, she feels herself speaking without her permission. "El," she says, and her voice is rough and scratchy from lack of use. "My name is El."

Flo smiles, but it doesn't look like how Mike used to, and it makes her frown. She doesn't know what it means.

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She sees the Sheriff walk in, and she feels all the tension in her body leave instantly. She smiles at him, because she knows smiling is good and it expresses happiness and she thinks that the warmth in her (even though she still feels soaked to the bone) must be that feeling.

He lets out a low gruff, and he moves toward her where she sits on the couch, curled in on herself where she must look like she's smaller than she actually is.

"Hey, El," he says, and his voice is also rough, but instead of it being from a lack of use, it's thick from emotion. "Glad to see that you're back."

She smiles again at him, and uses the blanket around her to make herself warmer.

"You planning on staying this time?"

She blinks, eyes wide. "Yes. I hope so."

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They're in the car and the heater is on high and she feels like she must be warm. She thinks the last time she was warm was the Last Time she was here, whenever that was.

"How long?" She asks from the front seat of the car.

He looks down at her. "How long it's been?"

She nods, and while she wants to know the answer, it also terrifies her.

"Three months."

She nods and looks back out the window.

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They pull into Will's house, and while she feels like she should be surprised, she knows that this also makes sense.

It makes a lot more sense than most things, so she's not going to question it.

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"So you're Eleven," Will says softly. She looks at him, expression soft, matching his. "I've heard a whole lot about you," he continues, hands folded in his lap. "You saved my life."

She jerks and looks at him with wide eyes. "No," she says, and the

room is silent. "Your mother did."

Will looks at her, long and hard. "Yeah, I know. But without you, I'd still be there."

She reaches over and puts her hand over his. Mike did this to her when she was worried, so she thinks it may work with Will. She's quiet for a moment (long enough for the subject to be dropped) before she opens her mouth. "I can help."

He freezes, and she wonders if she's done something wrong.

"Will?" her voice is small, and she feels more unsure of herself than she has in a long time. She doesn't like the feeling.

"How-" Will starts. He swallows and continues. "How did you know?" He's crying, she sees, and it makes her cry too.

"It's how I came back, I think. There was something, I felt it and it brought me back. I can help," she says, and this is something she knows. When she was in the Upside-Down she learned more, and she knows how to stop what is haunting Will Byers.

"Can I?" she asks, and he nods, tears leaking out of his eyes.

She places her hands on his shoulders and closes her eyes. She focuses on the Thing that is still with Will Byers, and slowly but surely she can feel it weaken. She doubles her strength, and she imagines it leaving Will alone (forever, forever, forever) and it going back to where it belongs.

She opens her eyes, nose running, eyes watering, and she sees Will sitting next to her on the bed with tears in his own eyes.

She knows that it worked.

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Mrs. Byers is one of the nicest people she can remember, and she starts crying when Mrs. Byers asks if she wants to stay with her and the Sheriff (Jim, she tells herself), be brothers with Will and Jonathan.

If she wants to be her daughter.

She nods yes, and the two of them cry for what seems like ages.

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"Where's Mike?" She asks that night. She follows her question with another, "Where's Dustin and Lucas?"

Will shrugs from his side of the room. "Probably at home. It's dark out, so I don't think any of them are anywhere else."

She nods, because while it sounds logical, she met the trio in the dark in the middle of the woods while it was raining.

She chooses not to say anything.

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There's school the next day, and while Will goes to school, Mrs. Byers takes the day off and takes her to the Wheelers'.

She feels odd, being in the house where she used to spend so much time (it was at most two weeks, but it felt like so much longer) without needing to hide in the basement.

She misses the little fort she had, and she wonders if Mike would let her back there, if it's still in place.

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They leave with a box of Nancy's old clothes, and with it in the back of the car the two go to the mall, because while they have a good number of things, she still needs shoes and Mrs. Byers feels that it's necessary that she have something that's been just hers.

Something that she picks out, something that has been only hers.

She may not understand, but she knows that she loves Mrs. Byers.

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She discovers that she likes things more for their comfort rather than

how they actually look, which is how she ends up with a bunch of old flannel shirts that look remarkably similar to those that she's "borrowed" from Jim. It explains the denim as well, but Mrs. Byers just smiles at her as they continue through the store.

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She loves them all, she thinks, but she doesn't know exactly what that means.

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She's helping Mrs. Byers in the kitchen when everyone comes home. She turns in a hurry and stares at the lot, feeling something like dread and excitement and worry all at once.

She smiles, nonetheless, at everyone, at *Mike*, and she hears herself say, "Hello."

Author's Note:

thanks so much for reading!!!! my tumblr is
@evahmohns